

Mr. Speaker, in light of the ongoing unique suffering of the Kashmiri Pandits, I am urging the Indian government to recognize the Kashmir Pandit community as a minority under Indian law to provide additional benefits and protection. While Hindus are the majority religion in India as whole, they are a minority, and indeed, a persecuted minority in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the chairman of the National Minority Commission has proposed that Hindu minorities in various Indian states be officially classified as minorities. The chairman's recommendation is pending before the government. Although such a designation would usually require an amendment to be passed by the parliament, the Lok Sabha, the lower House of the Indian Parliament, there may be occasions where the commission can unilaterally act.

While the details of such an action are obviously an internal matter for India's government, I soon will be circulating a letter to India's Prime Minister Vajpayee, which I hope my colleagues in Congress will join me in signing, urging that the appropriate steps be taken to provide the Pandits with the minority designation.

Mr. Speaker, the militants, with Pakistan's backing, have transformed a peaceful, secular state in India, one which happens to have a predominantly Muslim population, into a killing field. The militants make no secret of their desire to drive the Pandits out of Kashmir and do not think twice about killing as many of them as possible. And under such a severe, violent threat to their very existence, I believe that the designation of minority status is an urgent priority and respectfully urge the Indian Government to make this designation.

While I understand the enormity of the challenge, I urge Prime Minister Vajpayee and his government to create an environment in which the Pandit community can return to their homeland in the Kashmir Valley in the future. I also urge that the government of India raise the ongoing genocide of the Kashmiri Pandit community in bilateral talks with Pakistan.

I have the highest regard for Prime Minister Vajpayee, both personally and in his capacity as the elected leader of the world's largest democracy. I know he also grieves over the victimization of the Kashmiri Pandit community, and I hope to work closely with the Indian Government with the support of the Kashmiri-American community in resolving this humanitarian crisis.

SECURITY AT OUR NATIONAL LABS—WE MUST ALL BE CONCERNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I came to the floor to talk about Chinese espionage, something that seems to be missing in media coverage. A couple of weeks ago, an interview on The O'Reilly Factor caught my attention. Bill O'Reilly spoke with Lieutenant Colonel Edward McCallum, the director of Security and Safeguards for the Department of Energy. After 9 years serving in this position, Colonel McCallum has been placed on administrative leave and his job has been threatened.

Mr. Speaker, Colonel McCallum has a long and distinguished military career. The colonel is an individual who takes his job as a defender of our Nation and our constitutional rights seriously. Colonel McCallum has dedicated his life to protecting the citizens and the critical national security interests of America; and now, he is being punished because he came forward with facts surrounding espionage at our research and weapons laboratories.

Mr. Speaker, when President Clinton appointed Hazel O'Leary Energy Secretary, a dangerously casual attitude invaded the Department of Energy. Colonel McCallum has said that as security was relaxed and even cut, he and members of his staff repeatedly contacted Secretary O'Leary's office urging her to take measures to protect our sensitive technology. Unfortunately, their efforts were ignored. This destructive management style began with Secretary O'Leary, but similar efforts to urge Secretary Bill Richardson to protect the security of our weapons laboratories has been stonewalled.

Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough to think that our national security has been compromised. Now the same government that fails to recognize the gravity of stolen national security secrets is penalizing individuals like Colonel McCallum who fought and continued fighting for the safety and protection of our Nation. This is outrageous and completely unacceptable. It was Colonel McCallum's responsibility as the director of Security and Safeguards to make the Department aware of how to better protect U.S. technology; and yet, when he and Members of his staff tried to bring attention to the issue and make changes, nobody listened, or worse, chose to ignore his warnings.

This begs the question: What else could have been stolen and who else could have gained access to this information? What new information is now available to other nations that threaten each and every citizen, and why are we not more concerned?

Mr. Speaker, the safety and protection of our national security is an issue of critical national importance. We must commend, not penalize, men and women like Colonel McCallum whose dedication and commitment to this country is so strong that they would risk losing their jobs and their livelihood to protect America.

We know this administration is responsible for compromising our na-

tional security. At the very least, that is unforgivable. In administrations of greater accountability, these acts would have been labeled treasonous. Instead, they would like to quiet Colonel McCallum and bury this messy espionage issue.

This is an issue with serious consequences for each of us. When our national security is compromised, so too is the safety of each and every American. Unfortunately, this concern is lost on many Americans. The advances gained by other nations make all Americans more vulnerable. As such, we should all be concerned; we all must be concerned.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to appear on The O'Reilly Factor to talk about Chinese espionage and Colonel McCallum's quest for the truth. As Mr. O'Reilly and I discussed, something must be done for the colonel and the American people who rely on the government to protect and defend them and their way of life. Like all Americans, Colonel McCallum deserves protection. While the administration is threatening his job simply for telling the truth, they threaten security and safety of us all.

Mr. Speaker, it has become clear that the President and the administration are not committed to our national security, nor are they committed to the individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting it. Therefore, my good friend and colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) and I joined together to send a letter to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE), the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, asking the colonel to testify before the committee about this grave matter. With help from Fox News and Bill O'Reilly, we have aggressively followed and reported on this subject.

We can continue informing the American people how this administration has compromised our national security. Since my appearance last week, Mr. O'Reilly and I have heard from scores of average citizens from across our Nation. Each e-mail, letter or phone agreed on two basic points: first, to protect this country, we must act to address past occurrences of espionage while ensuring that it does not happen in the future; second, we must protect patriots like Colonel Ed McCallum who continues fighting to protect our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the citizens who contacted my office: the security of our Nation is precious.

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IT'S TIME TO DECIDE OUR NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, last week we saw the budget allocation for the Departments of Labor, Health and